

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 085158 TOSEC 090008

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FOL RPT BEIRUT 3119 ACTION SECSTATE 8 APR QUOTE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3119

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, LE, SY, US
SUBJ: MEETING WITH JUMBLATT

1. SUMMARY: JUMBLATT EXTENDS CEASEFIRE TEN DAYS OR WHATEVER NEEDED TO LAUNCH NEW PRESIDENT. LIKES PROPOSALS I GAVE HIM, WANTS TO REFLECT, AND WILL BE BACK TO ME TOMORROW THROUGH INTERMEDIARY AND UNDOUBTEDLY WITH SOME ADDITIONAL IDEAS. REMAINS SUSPICIOUS OF SYRIANS (AND SOMEWHAT OF AMERICANS) BUT GENERALLY POSITIVE.
END SUMMARY.

2. MET WITH JUMBLATT ALONE FOR 90 MINUTES. AS INEVITABLE WE HAD WIDE-RUNNING CONVERSATION INCLUDING DISSERTATION BY HIM AS TO HOW WE MISUNDERSTAND HIS PAL, MADAME
SECRET

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GHANDI. I HOPE SOMEDAY YOU, MR. SECRETARY, WILL MATCH WITS WITH HIM.

3. I HAVE HIM A RUNDOWN ON MY CONSULTATIONS HERE, KNOWING THIS IS EGO-FEEDER FOR HIM. ON MARONITES, HE LISTENED CAREFULLY AND THEN

SAID, ASIDE FROM CHAMOUN WHOM HE REGARDS AS MAD OR SENILE, HE CAN GET ALONG WITH THEM AND THAT HE ENVISAGED IN RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE SITTING DOWN WITH GEMAYEL TO DISCUSS FUTURE.

4. ON MY RPT MY PERSONAL IDEAS, HE SAID HE HAD JUST REFUSED "ARAFAT'S SUGGESTION THAT THE TRIPARTITE COMMISSION (PALESTINIANS, SYRIANS AND LEBANESE ARMY) BE RECONSITUTED. HIS REFUSAL BASED ON INCREAS- INGLY STRIDENT AND ANTI-JUMBLATT TONE OF SYRIANS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS HERE WHICH HE VIEWS AS ATTEMPT TO BAIT AND THEN DES- TROY HIM. HE TOLD 'ARAFAT TO GO AHEAD AND SECURE PARLIAMENTARY AREA WITH HELP OF LWBANESE FORCES BUT NOT TRY TO GET FORMAL AGREEMENT IN ADVANCE FROM HIM FOR THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE. (INCIDENTALLY HE SAID HIS FORCES ARE INSTRUCTED TO FACILITATE PARLIAMENTARY MEETING.) I TOLD HIM THAT MY PLAN ENVISAGED LEBANESE ARMY, PALESTINIANS, SYRIANS, PHALANGE AND FORCES UNDER HIS CONTROL (WHAT I CALLED "LEFTISTS" IN TALK TO MARONITES). ON REFLECTION, WE MAY HAVE SKPPED TOO LIGHTLY OVER THIS ONE. HE HAS GUNS AND SHOULD BE INCLUDED. MOST CERTAINLY, ATTEMPTS TO EXCLUDE HIM AT THE START WILL EARN HIS VETO.

5. GENERAL IDEA OF CREATION OF A MIXED FORCE FOR SECURITY PURPOSES, INCLUDING, OF COURSE, HIS (BEAR THIS IN MIND) IS OKAY. HE WANTS TO REFLECT ON IT A BIT, FEARFUL THAT IT COULD CONTRIBUTE TO PARTITION. I ARGUED THAT IS NOT THE POINT. I AM TALKING FIRST ABOUT SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS FOR URGENT SECURITY PROBLEMS AND, SECOND, ABOUT A PLAN WHEREBY THE SHORT-TERM IS ABSORBED INTO AND THEN SUPERSEDED BY LONGER-TERM PROPOSALS. HE SAID IT IS A POSSIBLY ACCEPTABLE IDEA. HE'LL REFLECT.

6. ON THE CONSORTIUM DEALS WANTS TO REFLECT AND WILL BE BACK TO ME TOMORROW. HE AGREES THAT ARMY RETRAINING IS A FIRST PRIORITY OF NEW PRESIDENT. HE IS INTRIGUED BY THOUGHT I GAVE HIM THAT IT NOT NECESSARY TO RECREATE ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE, GENDARMARIE, POLICE, ETC., AND ETC., ON EXACT GROUNDS AS ON PAST BUT THAT LEBANON-- PERHAPS WITH INTELLIGENT ADVICE FROM DISINTERESTED TECHNICIANS-- MIGHT RETHINK THROUGH ITS WHOLE SECURITY PACKAGE. (SORRY, I'M

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SPRINGING A NEW IDEA ON YOU WHICH COMES AFTER TALKING TO BRI- GADIER MUSA KANNAN AND OTHER THOUGHTFUL OFFICERS WHO SAY "WHY RECREATE WHAT FRENCH TOLD US WE NEEDED?"

7. HE MULLED OVER IDEA OF SMALL, ELITE FORCE WITH DEFINITE MISSION AND POSSIBLE USE OF CONSCRIPTION TO CREATE SORT OF "AMERICAN NATIONAL GUARD"--LATER IN ENGLISH. HE BELIEVES--CONTRARY TO WHAT PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS TELL ME--THAT THE SMALL FORCE COULD BE SET UP IN A FEW MONTHS AS THERE EXISTS CORPS OF "NON-EXTREMIST" MOSLEMS AND CHRISTIAN OFFICERS ON WHOM IT COULD BE BUILT. I EXPRESSED A CERTAIN PESSIMISM ABOUT HIS TIME FRAME BUT ENCOURAGED HIM TO THINK THROUGH HOW A TRULY NATIONAL FORCE CAN BE CREATED.

8. AS WE DISCUSSED CONSORTIUM IT BECAME CLEAR HE HAS ONE REAL PROBLEM

THAT IS SYRIA. HE SIMPLY DOES NOT WANT TO ACCEPT MENTALLY AT THIS TIME CONTINUED AND PERHAPS LARGER SYRIAN MILITARY PRESSURE. IN FACT, HE WANTS TO GET RID OF SAIQA NOW RPT NOW HERE. (WHILE WE WERE TALKING, SAIQA TROOPS TRIED TO DELIVER FREE FLOUR IN IMMEDIATE AREA TO INTENSE ANNOYANCE OF JUMBLATTISTS WHO CHASED THEM AWAY.) HE CAN FORESEE SMALL CONTINGENTS OF FRIENDLY ARAB STATES IN THE TRAINING PROCESS, BUT INSISTS THAT--ON THE WHOLE--LEBANON CAN DO TASK. I URGED HIM TO THINK THIS ALL THROUGH, TO REMEMBER THAT SYRIAN EFFORT SO FAR HAD BEEN HELPFUL, AND THAT HE SHOULD NOT DISCARD COMPLETELY SYRIAN ROLE SIMPLY BECAUSE HE HAVING SORT OF PROPAGANDA BATTLE WITH PRO-SYRIAN LEBANESE BAATH AND DAMASCUS PRESS.

9. WHILE HE WELCOMES IDEA OF WESTERN HELP, HE REMAINS SUSPICIOUS OF MOTIVES AND INSISTS REBUILDING OF LEBANON IS A LEBANESE TASK. HE REPEATED BELIEF THAT U.S. SUPPORTING SYRIAN INITIATIVE FOR OUR OWN POLITICAL ADVANTAGE IN FUTURE LEBANON. I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE NOT TRYING TO ESTABLISH SYRIAN HEGEMONY OVER LEBANON. WE WANT TO SEE A REUNIFIED, PEACEFUL LEBANON, PLAYING ITS NATURAL ROLE IN MEDITERRANEAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN WORLD. IT IS SIMPLY NOT IN AMERICAN INTEREST TO SEE DRAMATIC CHANGES TAKE PLACE WHICH COULD CREATE GREATER PROBLEMS IN FUTURE. HE AGREES THAT LEBANON'S ROLE AS I DEFINED IT IS ALSO HIS. IT SHOULD HAVE LIBERAL ECONOMY WHICH WILL ENCOURAGE WESTERN AND ARAB CAPITAL TO COME BACK. (DOUBT HE'LL TELL HIS PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS THIS BUT IT HAS BEEN A THEME OF OUR TALKS.) HE SAID WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT SYRIAN OCCUPATION OF LEBANON WOULD LEAD TO GUERRILLA WAR. I REPEATED AGAIN THAT THIS IS NOT SECRET

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RPT NOT OUR POLICY.

10. JUMBLATT INSISTED ON TALKING ABOUT THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND CHOICE OF PRESIDENTS. I TOLD HIM THAT ONLY THING I WOULD NOT DO IS PLAY A ROLE IN SELECTING THE PRESIDENT ON THE GROUNDS THAT ANY CHOICE I MADE WOULD BE DENOUNCED AS PART OF AN AMERICAN PLOT. I SAID I WAS RESISTING TAKING SUCH A POSITION WHICH THE FAR TOO MANY LEBANESE WHO WERE PRESSING ON ME. VERY POLITELY, HE SAID HE ACCEPTED THIS BUT NONETHELESS WANTED ME TO KNOW THAT EDDE IS HIS MAN AND HE HOPED AMERICANS COULD TELL SYRIANS THAT FOREIGNERS SHOULD NOT PROPOSE SOME CANDIDATES AND VETO OTHERS. THIS IS ONE WE MIGHT THINK ABOUT IF RAISED BY SYRIANS.

11. I THINK WE SHOULD HOLD OFF ON COMMUNICATING JUMBLATT'S THOUGHTS ANYWHERE UNTIL I HEAR FROM HIS PEOPLE TOMORROW. IN MEANTIME, AS HE TOLD ME, HE WANTS TO DISCUSS THEM FIRST WITH HIS OWN GROUP AND THEN WITH "PROGRESSIVES". GOD KNOW WHAT THEY MAY LEAD TO BUT, PERPETUAL OPTIMIST THAT I AM, I THINK HE'LL BE POSITIVE. HE ENJOYED OUR PRIVATE MEETING, SAID PUBLICLY TO PRESS IT HAD BEEN MOST HELPFUL AND THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO FURTHER CONSULTATION. I AVOIDED COMMENT TO PRESS OTHER THAN TO SAY "ASK MR. JUMBLATT, WITH WHOM I'VE HAD VERY GOOD TALK" AND THAT I HAVE NO PLANS TO LEAVE.

12. I'VE SAID THIS BEFORE AND I'LL REPEAT IT. SYRIANS SHOULD COOL IT SOMEWHAT ON JUMBLATT. OUR AIM IS TO CONTAIN JUMBLATT. THE BEST WAY IS TO GET HIM INVOLVED AND COOPERATING. RIGHT NOW HE CAN SPOIL IT ALL. IF WE CAN SUCK HIM INTO THE PROCESS, HE WON'T AND CAN'T. IF SYRIANS RELAX A BIT ON HIM, IT WILL HELP. I KNOW THIS IS DIFFICULT. SYRIANS ARE A COMPLICATED, SENSITIVE PEOPLE AND THEY ARE OUT ON A LIMB WITH A POLICY AND INTERVENTION HERE WHICH DIDN'T WORK AS EASILY AS THEY THOUGHT. JUMBLATT, FOR EXAMPLE, THINKS ASAD IS DOOMED AS HE HAS PUT HIMSELF AND ALAWITES IN SAME POSITION IN SYRIA THAT MARONITES ARE HERE.

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